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Journal Reporter Must Leave Iran, Officials Announce

A WALL STREET JOURNAL News Roundup

Gerald F. Seib, the Wall Street Journal reporter detained in Iran since last Saturday, was ordered expelled, Iranian officials said.

The Islamic Republic News Agency, or IRNA, quoted an Information Ministry official as saying that Mr. Seib was "expelled from Iran Wednesday after a judicial probe of his case ended." Tehran Radio, monitored in Athens, Greece, quoted a ministry official as saying that the 30-year-old Mr. Seib "has been expelled from the country" following a judicial inquiry.

Earlier yesterday, Iranian Prime Minister Hussein Musavi said Mr. Seib would be expelled within two or three days.

In New York, The Wall Street Journal's foreign editor, Karen Elliott House, said: "We've heard the news reports and hope they're true, but have not been contacted formally."

At the White House, spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Reagan administration officials had "no independent confirmation on Jerry's release at this point."

The Swiss Embassy in Tehran, which has represented U.S. interests there since the 1979 Iranian revolution, refused comment.

Mr. Seib, together with 56 other journalists, was invited to Iran last month to view the fighting with Iraq. After he was detained, Tehran Radio said on Tuesday that he was a "spy for the Zionist regime, who entered Iran disguised as a journalist."

Yesterday, Prime Minister Musavi told Tehran Radio that Mr. Seib had "engaged in certain investigations and collecting intelligence at the front." However, after Mr. Seib was questioned, "the issue has been clarified," Mr. Musavi said.

The official quoted by IRNA said Mr. Seib was "permanently banned from returning to Iran."